

FORMAT AND RULES FOR PLEADINGS AND OTHER PAPERS

The courts are rapidly expanding their use of electronic technology to manage court records, to meet their goal of providing the best service possible within their financial constraints. The purpose of these rules is to aid in the more efficient retention and retrieval of information in documents filed with the courts. Adapting to new technology has required some changes to the formatting of those documents. View the GR14 notice at <http://www.spokanecounty.org/clerk/data/GR14Notice.pdf>.

GENERAL RULE 14 (GR14) - Format for Pleadings and Other Papers

(a) Format Requirements. All pleadings, motions, and other papers filed with the court shall be legibly written or printed. The use of letter-size paper (8-1/2 by 11 inches) is mandatory. The writing or printing shall appear on only one side of the page. The top margin of the first page shall be a minimum of three inches, the bottom margin shall be a minimum of one inch and the side margins shall be a minimum of one inch. All subsequent pages shall have a minimum of one inch margins. Papers filed shall not include any colored pages, highlighting or other colored markings.

(b) Exception for Exhibits. This rule is not mandatory for exhibits, but the use of exhibits that comply with this rule is encouraged if it does not impair legibility.

(c) Application of Rule. This rule shall apply to all proceedings in all courts of the State of Washington unless otherwise specifically indicated by court rule.

(d) Citation Format. Citations shall conform with the format prescribed by the Reporter of Decisions. (See Appendix 1.)

[Adopted effective September 1, 1990; amended effective April 1, 2001; September 1, 2003.]

FORMAT AND STYLE RULES

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE COURTS DEVELOPED PURSUANT TO RCW 26.18.220

(September 1, 2000)

I. USE OF PLEADINGS AND FORMS NOT DEVELOPED BY THE OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE COURTS.

Pleadings and forms, other than those developed by the Office of the Administrator for the Courts, may be submitted provided:

- (A) The pleading or form is authorized under civil rules or statute (e.g., interrogatories and subpoenas, declarations of parties, etc.);
- (B) A similar pleading or form is not included in the mandatory forms developed by the Office of the Administrator for the Courts; and
- (C) The pleading or form complies with the format standards and rules set forth below and the caption of the form or pleading contains the notation "No Mandatory Form Developed."

II. FORM AND PLEADING STANDARDS

The following standards apply to written forms, to printed forms and to the electronic reproduction of forms and pleadings required by RCW 26.09.006, RCW 26.10.015 and RCW 26.26.065.

(A) REQUIRED FORMAT STANDARDS.

The format standards in this section are required for all forms, pleadings, motions and other papers filed with the court pursuant to GR 14. The rule applies to all proceedings in all courts of the state of Washington unless otherwise specifically indicated by court rule.

- (1) PAPER SIZE.
Paper size is 8-1/2" x 11".
- (2) WRITING OR PRINTING.
Forms and pleadings shall be legibly written or printed on one side of each page only. Forms and pleadings shall be printed in standard text fonts (e.g., Arial or Times New Roman) and in standard point sizes (e.g., 12 point or 10 point). Other point sizes may be used for captions and footers so long as the captions and footers are legible when faxed, photocopied or scanned. Bold, underlined and italicized type is acceptable where appropriate.
- (3) MARGINS.
 - a) First page:
 - (i) Top Margin: Three inches.
 - (ii) Left Side Margin: One inch.
 - (iii) Right Side Margin: One inch.
 - (iv) Bottom Margin: One inch.
 - b) Subsequent pages:
 - (i) Top Margin: One inch.
 - (ii) Left Side Margin: One inch.
 - (iii) Right Side Margin: One inch.
 - (iv) Bottom Margin: One inch.
- (4) FILED FORMS AND PLEADINGS.
Filed forms and pleadings shall not include any colored pages, highlighting or other colored markings.
- (5) EXHIBITS.

The required format standards are not mandatory for exhibits, but the use of the exhibits that comply with these format standards is encouraged if it does not impair legibility.

(B) RECOMMENDED FORMAT STANDARDS.

Local rules, if any, should be followed with regard to use of numbered paper, spacing and related formatting standards. The format recommendations set forth in CR 10(e) must be adhered to in the absence of local rules concerning use of numbered paper, spacing and related formatting standards.

- (1) Footers must be placed at the left side of the bottom of each page, **above** the one inch margin.
- (2) Attorney or firm name, mailing address and telephone number may be present in the right side of the one inch bottom margin.
- (3) Line numbers may be present in the one inch left side margin.
- (4) Vertical lines may be present in the one inch side margins.

The margin requirements in Section II (A)(3) are required for scanning purposes. Anything present in the margins might not be scanned and might not become a part of the court's or county clerk's electronic archive. Litigants are not prohibited from placing the items listed in 2 through 4 clear of the margins.

(C) CAPTIONS.

Captions must include the following:

- (1) NAME OF COURT. The name of the court. The court's name may be set forth at the left margin of the pleading or form, or centered at the top of the first page of the pleading or form.
- (2) FORM TITLE. The title of the form designated by the Office of the Administrator for the Courts. The title must be printed in capital letters in the lower 1/2 of the caption in the right hand field. The document title may not be changed or deleted, except to delete inapplicable portions of the title (e.g., the title of the parenting plan may be altered to indicate whether the parenting plan is a proposed, temporary or final parenting plan).
- (3) SCOMIS CODES. The SCOMIS (Superior Courts Management Information System) code is assigned to the form by the Office of the Administrator for the Courts. The SCOMIS code is to be printed underneath the form title. The SCOMIS codes may not be changed or altered from the assigned code.
- (4) DESIGNATION OF PARTIES AND ACTION. The parties and title of the action shall be designated as set forth in RCW 26.09.010 and RCW 26.10.020 in the left-hand field of the caption.

(D) FOOTERS. Footers for the forms are mandatory. The footers shall consist of the following components:

- (1) TITLE. Place the title of the form printed in capital letters on one line. Abbreviations may be used.
- (2) PAGE NUMBERING. Each page of a form should have a page number. Place the page number on the same line as the form title. It is preferable to indicate the number of pages in a form as part of the page number.
- (3) FORM NUMBER. Forms are numbered according to the sequence of events in court proceedings. The numbering system also is designed to allow for insertion of new forms in the proper sequence in the future. Place the form number and effective date, in parentheses, on the next line below the title of the form.
- (4) REFERENCES TO COURT RULES AND STATUTES. References to court rules and statutes must be listed on the form on the same line as the form number.
- (5) EXAMPLE FOOTER: PT FOR DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE - Page 1 of 8
WPF DR-01.0100 (9/2000) - RCW 26.09.020

(E) PARAGRAPHS.

- (1) PARAGRAPH NUMBER AND HEADER. Each paragraph of a form includes a paragraph number and, in most instances, a header. The paragraph number and header shall not be changed or deleted.
- (2) PARAGRAPH TEXT. The text of a paragraph shall not be altered, deleted or revised from the text provided in the form or pleading, except if there are check boxes provided in the form or pleading. If there are check boxes in the paragraph, the text preceding the first check box may not be altered, deleted or revised. The text following the check boxes may be deleted as provided below under Section (F). Text may be added to a paragraph only as provided in Section (G) below.
- (3) Example of Rule (E)(2) above -- The portions of Paragraph 1.7 of the Petition for Dissolution of Marriage which are shaded below may not be altered, deleted or revised in any fashion. The text following the check boxes may be deleted as provided below under Section (F):

1.7 JURISDICTION.

This court has jurisdiction over the marriage.

- ☐ This court has jurisdiction over the respondent because:
- ☐ the respondent is presently residing in Washington.
 - ☐ the petitioner and respondent lived in Washington during their marriage and the petitioner continues to reside, or be a member of the armed forces stationed, in this state.
 - ☐ the petitioner and respondent may have conceived a child while within Washington.
 - ☐ Other:

☐ This court does not have jurisdiction over the respondent.

(F) DELETION OF CHECK BOXES WHICH DO NOT APPLY.

- (1) Check boxes are used wherever identifiable alternatives to choices exist and precede the statements (choices) to which they apply.

Example -- Paragraph 1.7 of the Petition for Dissolution of Marriage states:

1.7 JURISDICTION.

This court has jurisdiction over the marriage.

☐ This court has jurisdiction over the respondent because:

- ☐ the respondent is presently residing in Washington.
- ☐ the petitioner and respondent lived in Washington during their marriage and the petitioner continues to reside, or be a member of the armed forces stationed, in this state.
- ☐ the petitioner and respondent may have conceived a child while within Washington.
- ☐ Other:

☐ This court does not have jurisdiction over the respondent.

- (2) Check boxes and the statements that follow the check box may be deleted if they do not apply to a case.

Example -- If the respondent is residing in Washington, the check boxes and statements in Paragraph 1.7 which do not apply may be deleted as follows:

1.7 JURISDICTION.

This court has jurisdiction over the marriage.

This court has jurisdiction over the respondent because the respondent is presently residing in Washington.

(G) ADDING TEXT TO A FORM OR PLEADING.

Text may not be added to a form or pleading except where the word "other" appears as a paragraph heading or a check box option in the form or pleading. Any text that is added to a form or pleading as a check box option must be preceded by the word "other" to identify the text as added text. Example:

1.7 JURISDICTION.

This court has jurisdiction over the marriage.

This court has jurisdiction over the respondent because:

Other: the respondent is submitting to the jurisdiction of the court by joining the petition.

(H) MISCELLANEOUS.

(1) NAMES OF PARTIES.

The names of the parties may be substituted for the terms petitioner, respondent, husband, wife, mother, father, etc., wherever appropriate in the body of the forms.

(2) ATTACHMENTS.

Attachments to the forms are permissible.

(3) WSBA NUMBERS.

Pursuant to APR 13(a) and CR 11, attorneys must include their WSBA number whenever a form or pleading is signed.

RCW 26.18.220

Standard court forms -- Mandatory use.

(1) The administrator for the courts shall develop not later than July 1, 1991, standard court forms and format rules for mandatory use by litigants in all actions commenced under chapters 26.09, 26.10, and 26.26 RCW effective January 1, 1992. The administrator for the courts shall develop mandatory forms for financial affidavits for integration into the worksheets. The forms shall be developed and approved not later than September 1, 1992. The parties shall use the mandatory form for financial affidavits for actions commenced on or after September 1, 1992. The administrator for the courts has continuing responsibility to develop and revise mandatory forms and format rules as appropriate.

(2) A party may delete unnecessary portions of the forms according to the rules established by the administrator for the courts. A party may supplement the mandatory forms with additional material.

(3) A party's failure to use the mandatory forms or follow the format rules shall not be a reason to dismiss a case, refuse a filing, or strike a pleading. However, the court may require the party to submit a corrected pleading and may impose terms payable to the opposing party or payable to the court, or both.

(4) The administrator for the courts shall distribute a master copy of the forms to all county court clerks. The administrator for the courts and county clerks shall distribute the mandatory forms to the public upon request and may charge for the cost of production and distribution of the forms. Private vendors may distribute the mandatory forms. Distribution may be in printed or electronic form.

[1992 c 229 § 5; 1990 1st ex.s. c 2 § 25.]

NOTES: Effective dates -- Severability -- 1990 1st ex.s. c 2: See notes following RCW 26.09.100.

SPOKANE COUNTY - LOCAL CIVIL RULES (LCR)
LCR 7. PLEADINGS

(a) Notice of Appearance. In each and every cause, after the filing of a complaint or petition, the attorney of record shall file a clearly designated "Notice of Appearance" with the court before filing any answer, motion, memorandum, or responsive pleading and shall serve a copy on the assigned trial judge. Effective 9/1/99

(b) Pro Se Pleadings. Pro se pleadings shall be typewritten or neatly printed in black or dark blue ink, shall conform to the format requirements of GR 14, and shall contain the party's mailing address and street address where service of process and other papers may be made upon him/her. Effective 9/1/01

SPOKANE COUNTY LOCAL COURT RULES (LCR)

LCR 10. FORM OF PLEADINGS AND OTHER PAPERS

(e) Format Requirements.

(1) Compliance with GR 14. All pleadings, motions and other papers presented for filing with the Clerk shall comply with GR 14. Effective 9/1/01

(2) Paper Requirements. All original documents filed shall be clear, legible and permanent, and printed or typewritten in black or dark blue ink on nontranslucent bond paper or other paper suitable for scanning. On documents not readable by the scanner, the original will be stamped by the clerk showing it was of poor quality for scanning. The following standards are required to assist the clerk for scanning purposes: use of binder clips on large documents; one staple per document (do not staple sub-documents within the pleading); use of bottom tabs only; no colored divider pages; and use of tape within documents (to affix small notes and receipts) instead of staples. Effective 9/1/01

(3) Consolidated Cases. For all causes wherein an order for consolidation (for any purpose) has been entered, the caption shall include the separated titles of the consolidated actions, along with the specific cause numbers, and indication to the clerk of which cause number the pleadings shall be filed under. The party filing the pleadings shall provide copies for each cause listed. If no indication is made and/or a copy is not provided for each cause, the clerk shall place the pleadings into the lowest (or earliest filed) cause. Effective 9/1/01

(4) Bottom Notation. Every proposed order, judgment and decree presented to a judge for signature shall be signed, on the lower left-hand corner of the page to be signed by the judge, by the individual attorney or pro se party presenting it. Attorneys signing shall include their Washington State Bar Association identification numbers. Amended effective 9/1/01

(5) Change of Name or Address of Attorney. An attorney whose office address or whose name changes shall, within ten days after the change, notify in writing the Superior Court Administrator's Office and shall file a notice in each Superior Court case file in which he or she is the attorney of record. An attorney may use the same format referred to in APR 13 or the form in use by the Washington State Bar Association. Amended effective 9/1/01

(A) Change of Address. The attorney shall furnish his or her Washington State Bar Association membership number, the previous address and telephone number, clearly identified as such, the new address and telephone number, clearly identified as such, and the effective date of the change.

(B) Change of Name. The attorney shall furnish his or her Washington State Bar Association membership number, the previous name, clearly identified as such, the full new name, clearly identified as such, and the effective date of the change.

SPOKANE COUNTY LOCAL COURT RULES (LCR)
LCR 79. BOOKS AND RECORDS KEPT BY CLERK

(g) Other Books and Records of Clerk.

. . . .

(2) Rejection of Unsuitable Materials.

(A) Original court record. Whenever there is presented to the clerk for filing in a cause, any paper or other material that is deemed by the clerk to be improper or inappropriate for filing, the clerk shall affix his file mark thereto and may forthwith orally apply to the court for a determination of the propriety of filing the material presented. If the court determines the paper or materials should not be made a part of the original court file, an order shall be entered to that effect and the material shall be retained by the clerk as an exhibit in the cause. The court may order that the unsuitable material be sealed, in which event it shall be available for inspection only by order of the court, except to the parties or their attorneys of record.

. . . .

(6) Videotaped Deposition(s). Videotaped deposition(s) played and reviewed in open court shall be treated as court exhibits, with the same retention standards. Except as ordered by the court, if a party wishes same reviewed deposition(s) to become part of the court file, then the party shall submit a true and accurate transcript of such deposition(s) to the clerk.

(7) Certified Appeal Board Records and Exhibits. Certified appeal board records and exhibits shall be kept separate from the original court file. Upon conclusion of the trial and stipulation of the parties, absent any objection or further appeal by the parties, the certified appeal board record and exhibits shall be withdrawn upon receipt to the clerk. In the event of an appeal to a higher court, when the final disposition of the appeal is filed, the parties shall withdraw the certified appeal board record and exhibits within thirty (30) days or upon notice from the clerk, authorize the clerk to destroy the above said records and exhibits. The clerk shall file any stipulation or authorization into the case file.

(8) Destruction of Records - Reproduction of Records.

(A) Microfilmed Or Scanned Records. Files, or portions thereof, and records that have been destroyed pursuant to RCW 36.23.065, may be reproduced and used in accordance with RCW 36.23.067 for trial or hearing. The party or attorney needing a reproduction of a microfilmed or scanned file or record

shall request the clerk, at least six (6) days prior to the scheduled court date, to reproduce the necessary materials.

(B) Confidential or sealed files and materials. The clerk shall not permit the examination of any confidential or sealed file or other sealed materials except by order of the court. Such order shall include findings to meet the requirements of GR-15 and any applicable statutes.

(i) Sealed Files. The clerk shall not permit the examination of any sealed file except upon the written order of a judge.

. . .

(j) Filing of Court Documents

(1) Filed Documents Available. Documents turned in for filing by 5:00 p.m. on any given day will be placed in the court file by 5:00 p.m. on the next work day, unless the document is a 'Clerks Action Required' document or a Financial document requiring a judgment number and execution docket entry. Filed documents must be coded, entered into the computer, scanned into the clerk's imaging system and placed in the court file. These documents will not be released until they are processed and placed in the court file. The court document will be available for use by 5:00 p.m. on the first work day subsequent to filing. 'Clerks Action Required' and Financial documents require additional time for review, copying, execution docket coding, JIS data entry and verification. These documents will not be released until they are processed and placed in the court file. The court documents will be available for use by 5:00 p.m. on the third to fifth work day subsequent to filing.

(2) Action Documents - Requirements. Pleadings or other papers requiring action on the part of the clerk, other than file stamping, docketing and placing in the case file, shall be considered action documents. Action documents shall include a special caption directly below the case number on the first page, indicating 'Clerks Action Required'.